

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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WASHINGTON, D.C. February 7, 1965. John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that three important American primitive paintings, gifts of Colonel Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, have been placed on special exhibition in Lobby "D." They are part of a recent gift of 8 paintings and are in addition to 215 items already given to the Gallery by Colonel and Mrs. Garbisch from their extensive collection of 18th-and 19th-century American primitive art.

The three paintings are a landscape and two portraits. The Cornell Farm (36-3/4" x 49"), painted in 1848 by the Quaker artist, Edward Hicks, shows a scene in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. According to Alice Ford, author and critic of American art, it "far and away transcends any farm scene executed by an American primitive painter. To not a few the 'Cornell Farm' is his outstanding work." The full-length portraits of Captain Samuel Chandler (54-7/8" x 47-7/8") and his wife were painted about 1780 by Winthrop Chandler. Chandler's portrait of his brother shows in the background a battle scene from the Revolutionary War.

Colonel and Mrs. Garbisch have for many years been collecting works of art by native American artists who had little or no instruction in the techniques of the European masters. Comprising works executed in oil, water colors, pastels and other media, theirs is largest and most comprehensive collection of American primitive paintings yet assembled.

Edward Hicks (1780-1849) was a Quaker minister who became famous for his series of paintings on the theme of the Peaceable Kingdom. He strove to make his works a vehicle for conveying his dreams of an ideal and serene society based on his religious convictions. His farm pictures

(More)



were all painted in the last four years of his life. Exact in detail and highly literal, they nevertheless have a mood of fantasy. The Cornell Farm is inscribed by the artist as "An Indian summer view of the Farm & Stock of James C. Cornell of Northampton Bucks county Pennsylvania. That took the Premium in the Agricultural Society, october the 12, 1848 Painted by E. Hicks in the 69th year of his age."

Though not well known until recently, Winthrop Chandler (1747-1790) now ranks among the outstanding provincial painters of this country. The subjects for his portraits were mainly relatives and were representative products of the political and social life of the Revolutionary period.

Captain Samuel Chandler had kept a tavern during the Revolution and in 1780 was a member of the Connecticut Legislature. He was active in the Revolutionary War and was Captain of the 11th Company, 11th Regiment of the Connecticut militia. The battle shown in the background of the painting is probably one in which he took part. At his death in 1790, Captain Chandler's will left the sum of 5 shillings to each of his sisters and brothers. The inventory of his effects at that time valued the sword shown in the painting at 36 shillings and the portraits as "2 effigies or likenesses, 6 pounds."

The portrait of Mrs. Samuel Chandler, a sensitive characterization, shows a wealth of detail in the dress and accessories of her time, rendered with the attention to flat, almost abstract pattern characteristic of the American primitive painter.

Mr. Walker said "The style which evolved out of American primitive painting is uniquely its own. Not hampered by academic tradition or techniques, the untrained artist approached his subject with a freshness of vision and a vigor of attack that captured the significant aspect or detail in a manner which to 20th-century Americans appears curiously contemporary. We are particularly grateful to Colonel and Mrs. Garbisch for the gift to the Nation of these important paintings."

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